



Three Business Districts & One Bikeway. . . Getting Past COVID

Arlington Heights
Bedford Center
E. Lexington Village

September 14, 2021

FinePoint
Associates

dhcd
Massachusetts
RAPID RECOVERY PLANS

Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Summary Overview
3. Presentation of RRP Recommendations
4. Updates on Recommendations & Next Steps
5. Questions

Today's Team

Community Project Leaders



Lexington – Carol Kowalski, Assistant Town Manger for Development



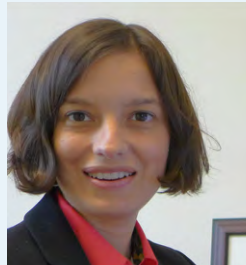
Lexington - Sandhya Iyer, Economic Development Office



Lexington - Casey Hagerty, Economic Development Office



Arlington - Ali Carter, Economic Development Coordinator



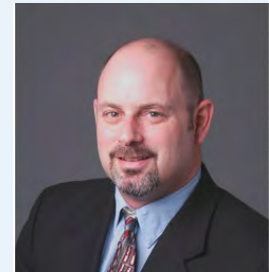
Bedford – Alyssa Sandoval, Economic Development Director



Plan Facilitator Team



Peg Barringer, FinePoint Associates, Partner



Ted Brovitz, Brovitz Community Planning and Design



Tuti Thapa, FinePoint Associates, CED Analysis



Adrienne Schaefer Borrego Arts & Culture

Acknowledgements



Town of Arlington

Project Leader: Ali Carter,
Economic Development
Coordinator

Jennifer Raitt, Director of Planning
and Community Development
Kelly Lynema, Senior Planner
Daniel Amstutz, Senior
Transportation Planner

Arlington Select Board

Lenard Diggins, Select Board Member,
Transportation Advisory Committee

Arlington Chamber of Commerce

Beth Locke, Executive Director

Arlington Bicycle Advisory Committee

Christopher Tonkin, Chair

Arlington Business Owners/Representatives

Thank you to all who participated in the Business Survey.



Town of Bedford

Project Leader: Alyssa Sandoval,
Housing and Economic Development
Director

Tony Fields, Planning Director
Charlie Ticotsky, Special Assistant to
Town Manager
Jeannette Rebecchi, Transportation
Program Manager

Bedford Cultural District and Cultural Council

Amy Lloyd, Cultural District Partnership/Planning Board
Barbara Purchia, Cultural District Partnership/Cultural
Council, Chair

Committee Representatives

Mark Bailey, Bicycle Advisory Committee, Chair	Scott Shaw, Transportation Advisory Committee, Chair
Michael Barbehenn, Trails Committee, Chair	Sandra Hackman, Council on Aging, Chair

Bedford Chamber of Commerce

Pete Bagley, Executive Director

Bedford Business Owners/Representatives

Thank you to all who participated in the Business Survey.



Town of Lexington

Project Leaders: Sandhya Iyer,
Economic Development Director and
Casey Hagerty, Economic Development
Coordinator

Carol Kowalski, Assistant Town
Manager for Development
Sheila Page, Assistant Planning
Director
Susan Barrett, Transportation Manager

Lexington Planning Board

Charles Hornig, Planning Board Chair
Bob Creech

Lexington Bicycle Advisory Committee/Advocates

Kevin Falcone
Keith Ohmart

Munroe Arts Center

Cristina Burwell

Lexington Chamber of Commerce

Erin Sandler-Rathe, Executive Director

Lexington Business Owners/Representatives

Jim Cadenhead, Battle Road Bikes, Lexington

Thank you to all who participated in the Business Survey.



Plan Facilitator Team

Project Director: Peg Barringer, Partner, FinePoint Associates

Vibhustuti Thapa, Community Economic Development Analyst

Adrienne Schaeffer Borrego, Arts, Culture & Placemaking

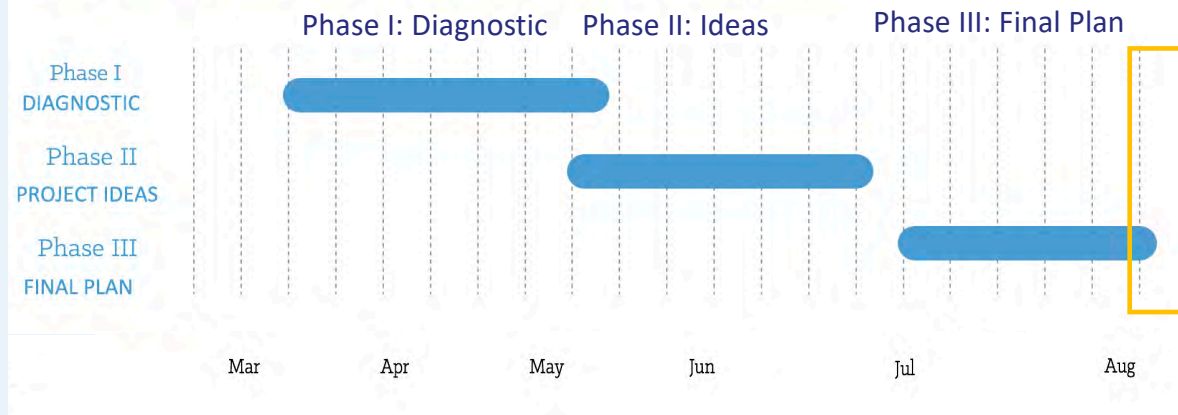
Theodore Brovitz, Founder & Principal, Brovitz Community
Planning & Design

Thank you
to everyone who . . .
contributed insights
and input throughout
the RRP process and
participated in the
walk-about tours,
community meetings,
and business survey.

Summary Overview

RRP Process

Rapid Recovery Plan (RRP) Program



Result . . . A set of data-driven Recommended Actions/Projects

- with details that make them actionable and
- information that could be included in funding applications



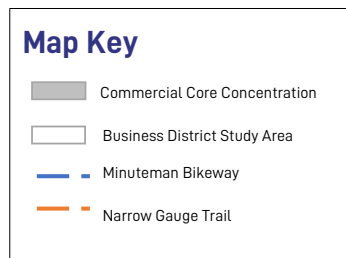
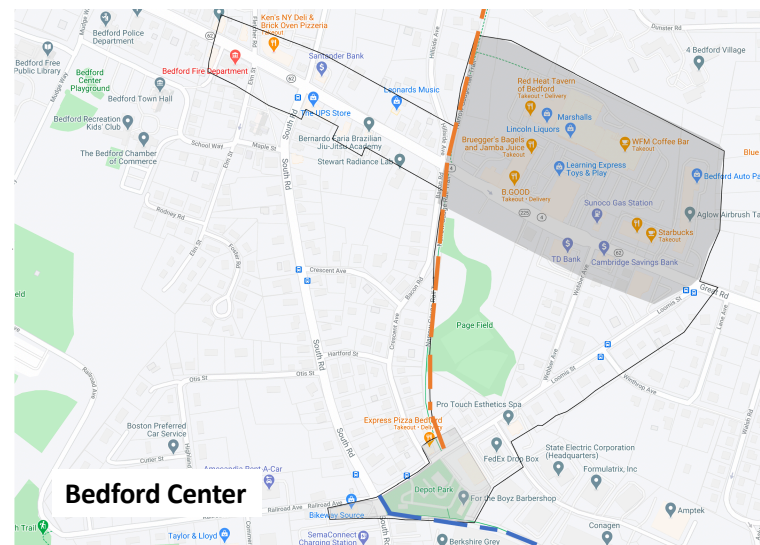
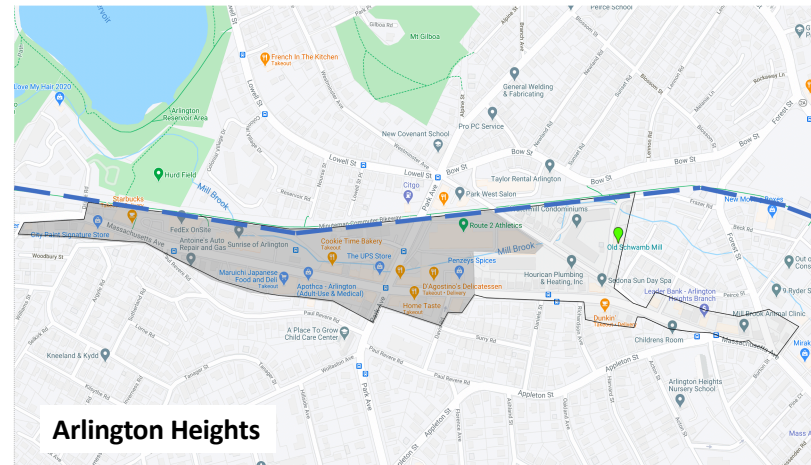
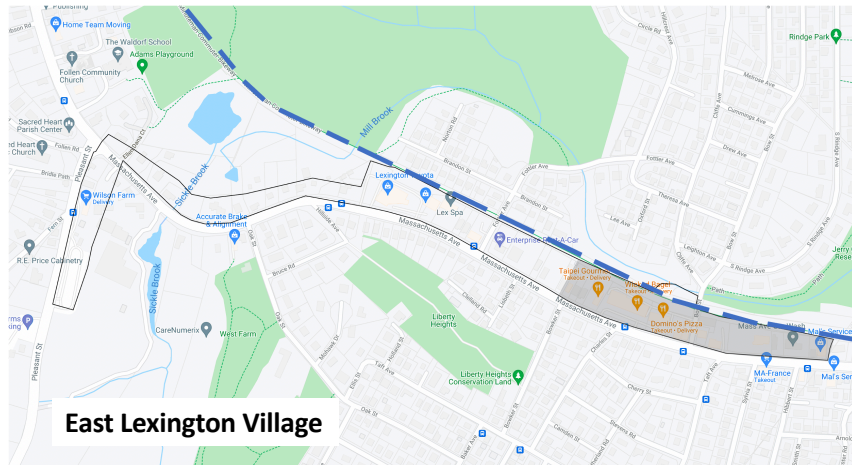
Rapid Recovery Plan (RRP) Program Application

3 Towns came together to apply for planning assistance to help the 3 Business Districts recover from COVID impacts

Requested emphasis be placed on how the Districts could capitalize on their common asset — Minuteman Bikeway

Very unique among RRP Project

- Multi-community and Bikeway focus



Business Districts hit hard by COVID-19.

Three Business Districts

- Arlington Heights
- Bedford Center
- E. Lexington Village

Sales and Foot traffic



Remote working

Residents turning to online purchasing

68% of businesses - revenue loss

Half of the businesses - on-site customer counts still down



Walk About Tour



FinePoint Associates

RRP Community Engagement

- Walk About Tours with Community Leaders, Business Owners, and Residents
- Initial Assessment Presentation and Listening Session
- Business Survey of Owners and Representatives
- Focus Group with Bikeway/Biking Organizations from each Community
- Interviews and Work Sessions with Community Project Leaders
- Community Forum — Diagnostic Findings and Discussion
- Community Feedback Sessions to Develop Draft Recommendations

Diagnostic Findings

Physical Environment — Bikeway and Bike User Specific

- The Minuteman Bikeway runs close to the three Districts but the businesses are not fully capitalizing on this asset.
- Buildings abutting the trail have blank facades and provide no indication this is a place worth stopping.
- Insufficient wayfinding results in missed opportunities to attract Bikeway users.
- There are physical and visual access issues -- Bikeway users cannot always easily get to businesses or see anything to make them aware of the businesses .
- Bike facilities and amenities in the districts are limited.

Physical Environment — Districts Overall

- The three Districts have very different settings and development patterns.
- Streetscape treatments and business "spill-outs" are limited, and more storefront elements are needed.
- The 100% Corner in Arlington Heights is mostly inactive.
- All of the Districts have good multi-modal access.
- Informational signage and directories listing business offerings are lacking.
- District branding is limited.

Business Environment

- The three commercial districts encompass over 1/2 million square feet of first-floor commercial space; 9% of first-floor units are vacant.
- Key opportunity sites include: the Park Ave industrial property and MBTA Bus Depot in Arlington Heights and the former Veterans of Foreign Wars property in Bedford.
- All three districts have a collection of eateries and a few business clusters. Arlington Heights and Bedford Center have "destination/ anchor" businesses.
- COVID-19 impacts were widespread in all districts. Arlington Heights was hit the hardest, followed closely by Bedford Center. The least impacted was East Lexington Village due to the "essential" nature of most businesses.

- The majority of businesses rent their space and are independently-owned, single-location establishments. Only about one-half are open after 6:00 p.m.
- Top priorities for businesses include: more outdoor dining and selling opportunities, more cultural events, and coordinated marketing strategies.

Customer Base

- The "Resident Market Segments" for all three districts are well-educated, affluent, and older than the state average. Residents in Lexington and Bedford are more likely to have children in the household.
- Sales leakage may point to opportunities. Arlington and Lexington residents spend over \$1.2 billion in stores and restaurants outside their towns each year, and Bedford residents spend over \$458 million outside.
- The "Bikeway User Market Segment," including commuters, recreational cyclists, walkers, and joggers, is largely untapped, despite very close proximity.
- Proactive strategies can be implemented to attract a higher percentage of Bikeway users.
- All three Districts also have an opportunity to attract nearby employees.

Admin Capacity

- Current zoning focuses primarily on the "Private Realm."
- Regulations governing signage and outdoor display of merchandise are restrictive, especially in Bedford.
- There is no organization currently managing and overseeing recovery efforts in the business districts.

Recommended Actions/Projects

Private Realm	Create a Rear Facade/Store-Back Improvement Program to enhance connection between the Business Districts and the Bikeway. [All 3 Districts]
Revenue/ Sales	Design and install wayfinding signage and other elements to encourage Bikeway users to patronize the Business Districts. [All 3 Districts]
	Develop additional cultural events/programming; start with a "Bike-Themed Week" with a coordinated schedule of events in each of the Business Districts. [All 3 Districts]
	Implement a Bike & Pedestrian-Friendly Business District (BFBD) campaign. [All 3 Districts]
Public Realm	Connect the Bikeway to the Districts via designated access way improvements (e.g., pavement markings, design elements), especially at Bow Street, Park Ave, and Depot Park to the Narrow Gauge Trail. [All 3 Districts]
	Install additional bike and pedestrian amenities in the Districts. [All 3 Districts]
	Implement sidewalk zones to edit existing streetscape and add new elements. [East Lexington and Arlington Heights]
	Create a well-marked public "at-grade" accessway from the Bikeway through the parking lot at 30 Park Ave. [Arlington Heights]
	Activate Bow Street Park by installing amenities (to complement nearby food businesses and accommodate events) and work with local organizations to develop programming. [East Lexington]
	Activate Veteran's Memorial Park by installing amenities (to complement nearby food businesses and accommodate events) and work with local organizations to develop programming. [Bedford Center]
Culture/ Arts	Engage with the MBTA to explore ways to activate/revitalize the underutilized Bus Depot property. [Arlington Heights]
	Create a mural program (especially for public locations and businesses adjacent to the Bikeway. [All 3 Districts]
Admin Capacity	Create a Cultural District Art Walk along the Narrow Gauge Trail that would include a series of temporary art installations. [Bedford Center]
	Revise outdoor display regulations to promote lively, attractive merchandise displays and spill-out elements. [Bedford Center and Arlington Heights]
	Revise the sign bylaw and outdoor display regulations to encourage a variety of high-quality sign types and promote lively, attractive outdoor merchandise displays. [East Lexington]

Recommendations



PRIVATE
REALM

Private Realm

Create a Rear Façade/Store-Back Improvement Program to enhance the connection between the Bikeway and the Business Districts. *[All 3 Districts]*



Private
Realm



Estimated Budget
\$200,000



Short Term
2 years



Description

Financial Incentive Program to encourage business and property owners to renovate facades that face the Bikeway (possibly include open rear entrances/outside seating)

Program Model Options

Traditional Program Model

- Eligibility requirements
- Design standards
- Max financial assist & match
- Owners reimbursed after renovation

“Art-Inspired” Model with Artist Partner

- Eligibility & max. financial assist
- Call for interested biz/property owners
- Call for proposals from artists/makers
- Committee and biz/property owner involved in art partner selection

Why?

1. Building facades facing the Bikeway are non-descript – no indication there is Business District worth stopping at.
2. “Bikeway User Market Segment” is largely untapped
3. Make Bikeway users more aware of Business Districts
4. COVID-19 impacts – decline in foot traffic and sales

Steps

1. Research regulations
2. Review program models, research funding
3. Develop program policies, procedures, forms, materials
4. Market the program
5. Administer program
6. Evaluate Operations & impacts



Photos FinePoint Associates:

Best Practice Example

Atlanta BeltLine, GA Façade pARTnership Program



"Art-Inspired"
program example

Source: www.beltline.org



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Best Practice Example

Cambridge, MA Storefront Improvement Program “Traditional” program example

- Up to \$15,000 grant per storefront
- Requires 1:1 match from business/property owner
- Business tenants can participate with property owner approval

For ADA improvements – up to \$20,000, 10% match



Updated façade, inviting display windows, accessible entrances



New signage & painting

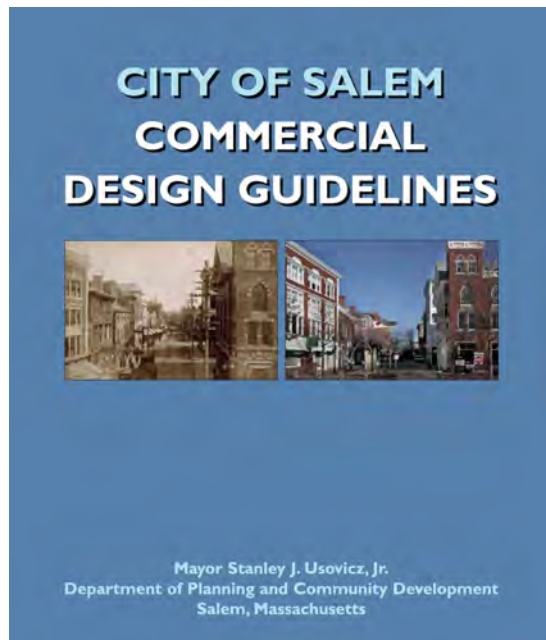


New signage & painting

Source: City of Cambridge

Best Practice Example

Salem, MA Storefront Improvement Program “Traditional” program example



City developed Commercial Design Guidelines to help ensure high-quality improvements.

Source: City of Salem

Rapid Recovery Plan



Not Recommended: This awning that has oversized lettering, obscures the architectural details of the façade, and separates the upper façade from the storefront area. (Newburyport)



Not Recommended: This internally illuminated awning becomes an unattractive and oversized sign at night.



Recommended: This glass and steel awning is well integrated into the traditional façade by color and proportion.



Recommended: Canvas awnings that fit within the structural frame. (Andover)



REVENUES & SALES



Revenue and Sales

Design and install wayfinding signage and elements to encourage Bikeway users to patronize the Business Districts. *[All 3 Districts]*



Revenue/
Sales



Low <\$50,000



Short Term
1- 3 years



Photos FinePoint Associates



Description

1. Business District Destination Signs on the Bikeway
2. Wayfinding Signage at the Bedford Terminus of the Bikeway
3. Entry Archway to Narrow Gauge Trail in Bedford
4. District Welcome Signage & Business District Information/Directories
5. Map Kiosks near major Bikeway access points to Business Districts

Why?

1. No signage on the Bikeway identifying any of the Business Districts.
2. Make Bikeway users more aware of the Business Districts and offerings available.
3. Guide Bikeway users form the Bikeway to Narrow Gauge Trail.



Source: Favermann Design.



Best Practice Example

Fairmount Greenway Boston, MA

On-street biking and walking route that loosely follows Fairmount/Indigo rail line.

New wayfinding signage was recently developed and installed.

Signs provide direction and estimated travel time for walking and biking.



What	Low Estimate	Mid-range estimate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sign design concept develop Sign location identification + mapping 6-mile corridor 	\$3,000	\$6,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final signs design <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12 x 18 inches 12 signs Sign location identification + mapping 1.5 mile corridor 	\$2,000	\$4,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Printing Corrugated plastic s 12 signs + test print) 	\$250	\$350
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sign Installation 	\$100	\$500

Source: "Laws of Attraction," Civic Space Collaborative, Michelle Moon

Best Practice Example

Arlington Heights Village, IL

Example – Business District Welcome Sign and Business Directory/Map

The Village Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission developed several walking courses.

8 Business Directories were installed that show Downtown business locations and suggested walking routes.



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Source: www.vah.com

Arch Examples



Photo FinePoint Associates

Narrow Gauge Trail Entrance, Bedford



Source: <https://betsykschulz.com>

Coastal Rail Trail, Solana Beach, CA



Source: <https://www.cycleblaze.com>

Connellsville, PA

Develop additional cultural events/programming. Start with a "Bike-Friendly themed Week or Month". [All 3 Districts]



Revenue/
Sales



Estimated Budget
\$2,300+



Short Term
Approx. 1 years

Description

"Bike to Business" Week - series of events during one week collaborated between the three towns

Focus of the events - bring cyclists from the Minuteman Bikeway into the business districts to become familiar with businesses

Community partners - take ownership of specific events.

Why?

This project aims to leverage the increased use of the Bikeway by connecting cyclists with the adjacent business districts through events and programming.

Steps

1. Recruit 3-5 community partners for event planning
2. Form event planning committee
3. Meet with committee to set date, and create initial event plan
4. Publicize events
5. Hold event
6. Meet with committee for event debrief



Bike Bingo Card from Seattle Bicycle Benefit event.

Source: bikeslocounty.org/bike-month-rolls/

Best Practice Example

San Luis Obispo, California

Bike Month

Goal: incentivize cycling and connect with local businesses.

- Tweed Ride (Participants wore turn-of-the-century attire and vintage velocipedes.)
- Bike Happy Hour/Film Screening
- Ride to the Farmers Market
- Pedal to Paella VI



Source: bikeslocounty.org/bike-month-rolls/

“Tweed” costumed ride during Bike Month in San Luis Obispo

Portland, Oregon

Pedalpalooza

- Breakfast on the Bridges
- Picnic, Parks and Swings Ride
- Boba, Bánh Mì, & Desserts ride
- Superhero Bike Ride



Volunteers serving cyclists breakfast as a part of the Breakfast on the Bridges monthly event.

Source: [Breakfast on the Bridges Facebook Page](#)

Implement a Bike-Friendly Business District (BFBD) campaign. [All 3 Districts]



Revenue/
Sales



Estimated Budget
\$5,050+



Short Term
Approx. 6-12 months



Source: www.bikefriendlysgv.com

Window decal

Description

BFBD - the integration of bicycling into a business district's operations, events, and promotions.

BFBDs can connect local businesses with cyclists (and perhaps walkers/other Bikeway users)

- Participating businesses offer incentives and amenities. Examples: bike parking, water, discounts, etc.
- Member businesses are rewarded through a joint marketing campaign.



Source: <http://bikewalkkc.org>

Why?

Leverage increased user activity on the Minuteman Bikeway.

Encourage cyclists to patronize businesses in the three districts.

Promote biking (and walking).

Steps

1. Partner with Bicycle Advisory Committee
2. Create committee
3. Recruit businesses
4. Develop benefits for businesses and recruit businesses
5. Confirm participating businesses
6. Create marketing strategy
7. Launch and Publicize

Best Practice Example

Los Angeles, California

Bicycle Friendly Business District Pilots

Goal: incentivize cycling and connect with local businesses.

Bike racks and public bike infrastructure

- Bike racks installed in several locations.
- Participating businesses could request a free-bike rack

Local partnerships and promotional efforts

- Identified "local business champions" to facilitate connections and develop **outreach** strategies and materials.
- Participating businesses had to provide at least one of the listed services, discounts or amenities for customers and employees arriving by bike, on foot, or via transit.
- District Promotion - logo was designed for signage and other marketing

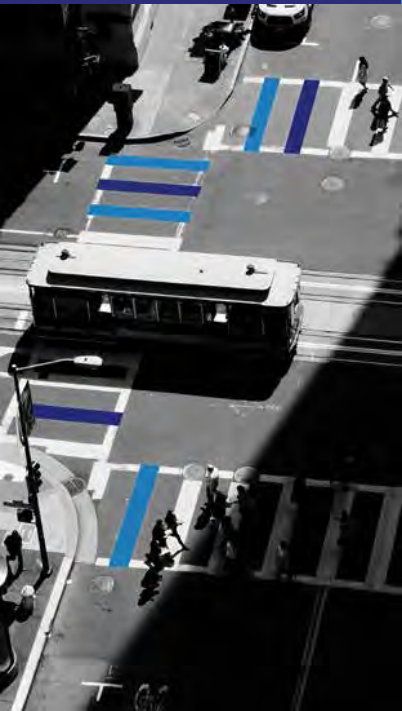


Source: Active San Gabriel Valley's Facebook page

Volunteers doing outreach for the pilot Bicycle Friendly Business District.



**PUBLIC
REALM**



Public Realm

Connect Bikeway to Districts via "designated access way" improvements especially at Bow St., Park Ave. and Depot Park to Narrow Gauge Trail (e.g., pavement markings, lane/sharrows, design elements). [All 3 Districts].



Public
Realm



Estimated Budget
<\$50,000+



Short Term
Approx. 2 years



Source: Google Maps and Brovitz CPD

Bow Street in E. Lexington with conceptual Minuteman Sharrows leading trail users from the Bikeway to the Business District

Description

Businesses are oriented to the street and sidewalks and not to the Minuteman Bikeway.

Arlington Heights and East Lexington have grade separation challenges between the Bikeway and business districts.

Bedford Center has visual and physical separation issues between the Bikeway and business district.

Common factors to be addressed to connect the 3 districts to Bikeway users include:

- Improve visual or physical connection to the Bikeway and business districts.
- Improve wayfinding signage and pavement markings from the Bikeway to the districts.
- Provide information about specific business offerings and other points of interest.
- Address difficult access points in some areas.

Pavement markings should be coordinated and consistent with the additional suggested wayfinding signage in the 2014 Wayfinding Plan.

Why?

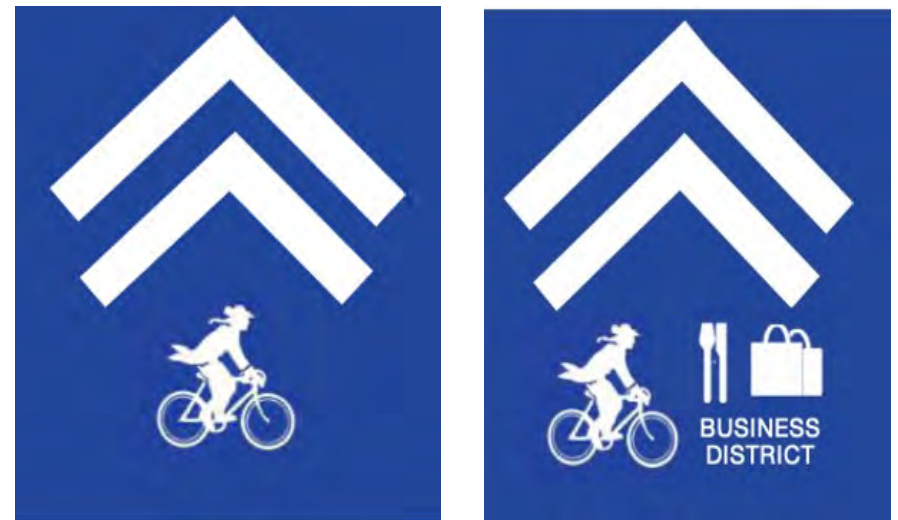
1. Draw additional customers off the Bikeway with some well-placed and designed pavement markings.
2. More customers will help local businesses recover more rapidly from the pandemic.

Steps

1. Collaborate and seek input on pavement markings
2. Prepare final design and obtain permits
3. Determine sources and levels of funding
4. Install pavement markings

Examples of Possible Designated Accessway Pavement Markings

PUBLIC
REALM



Source: Brovitz Community Planning & Design

Install additional bike and pedestrian amenities in the Districts. [All 3 Districts].



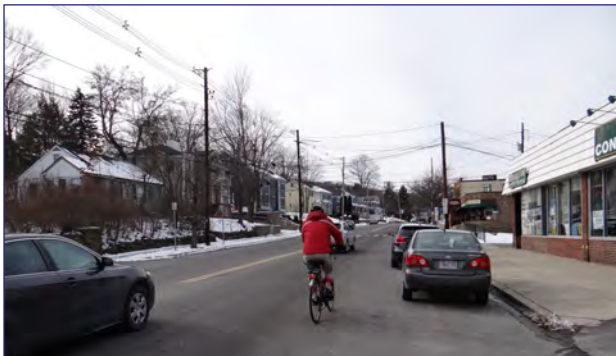
Public
Realm



Estimated Budget
\$50-200,000



Short Term
Approx. 2 years



Top: Bench in Arlington Heights.

Bottom: Cyclist sharing the road with cars in East Lexington.

Photos: FinePoint

Description

Pedestrian and bike amenities are limited and inconsistent in the 3 districts.

Amenities such as bike racks, bike corrals, repair stations, bike share stations, business directories, and community information kiosks are needed in the districts.

Adding more bike and pedestrian amenities will enrich and activate the three business districts.

Arlington, Lexington, and Bedford should work together on the planning for additional bike and pedestrian amenities.

Why?

1. Lack of bike and pedestrian amenities and information leading customers to the business districts identified as a key challenge.
2. Draw potential customers into the 3 districts to support businesses.

Steps

1. Hire a Bike/Ped Planning Consultant
2. Hold Kick Off Meeting with Stakeholders
3. Hold Public Workshops
4. Prepare Design Plan and Activation Standards
5. Install Bike and Pedestrian Amenities

Best Practice Example

Install additional bike and pedestrian amenities in the Districts. [All 3 Districts]

PUBLIC
REALM



New York Canalway Trail, Village of Pittsford, NY.

Source: The Urban Phoenix



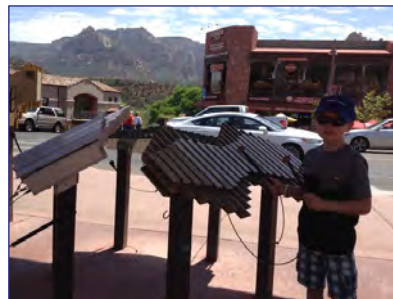
Fish Bike Rack, Turners Falls, MA.

Source: T. Brovitz



Shark Bike Corral, Scituate, MA & Public Xylophone Stand, Sedona AZ, Cambridge, MA.

Rapid Recovery Plan



FinePoint Associates



Newburyport & Falmouth, NY Kiosk/Bus. Directories. Source: T. Brovitz



Implement sidewalk zones to edit existing streetscape and add new elements. [East Lexington and Arlington Heights]



Public
Realm



Estimated Budget
>\$200,000



Medium Term
5 - 10 years



Arlington Heights Streetscape.

Photo: T. Brovitz



East Lexington Streetscape.

Photo: T. Brovitz

Description

East Lexington: Current streetscape treatments are very limited: sidewalks are a combination of concrete/asphalt in fair/poor condition with several wide curb cuts; planting strips are inconsistent with missing trees and generally not well maintained; 10 crosswalks with only 1 curb extension (at Mal's Service Center); and poor lighting. Limited streetscape is leading to higher speed traffic in the district.

Arlington Heights: Current streetscape is generally dated and in poor condition: loose brick pavers; missing street trees; limited benches and bike racks; inconsistent position of the raised granite planters and street trees; and poor lighting.

Streetscape Elements: Collaborate with business community to create a vibrant and activated streetscape: Handicapped accessibility improvements; Landscape/tree planters; more curb extensions and parklets; Attractive sidewalks with a broad combination of street trees, landscaping, benches, bike racks/corrals, info kiosks/business directories, banners; and spill-outs spaces and other activation applications.

Why?

1. Streetscape improvements allow businesses to take advantage of sidewalk access to outdoor settings which will increase capacity and revenue.
2. Attractive and vibrant sidewalks will draw more customers into the districts from nearby neighborhoods, Mass Ave, and the Bikeway.

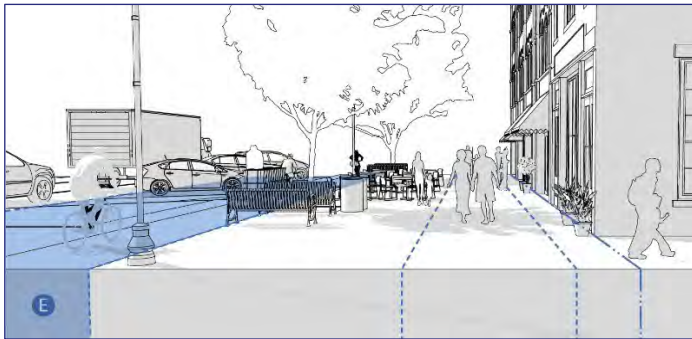
Steps

1. Kick off meeting between the design consultant, town staff, and stakeholders
2. Public interactive workshops with property owners, business owners, relevant boards, and stakeholders
3. Prepare Streetscape Design Plan and Activation Standards
4. Implement Streetscape Plan and Design Standards

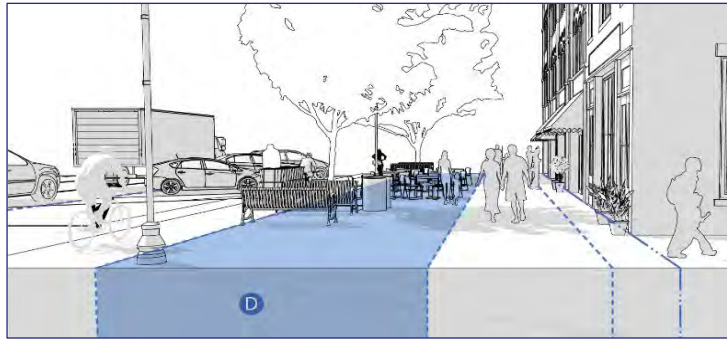
Streetscape Design and Utilization Standards — Northampton, MA

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Street Enhancement Zone



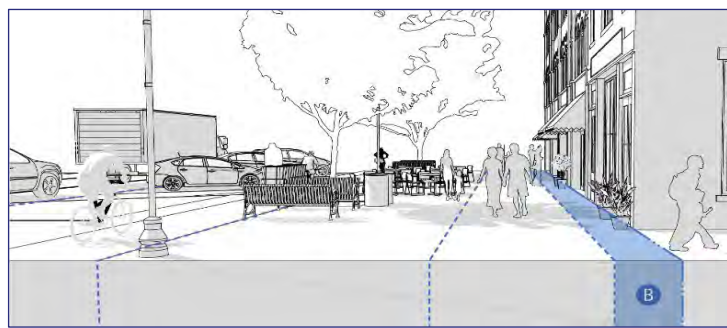
Furnishing and Utility Zone



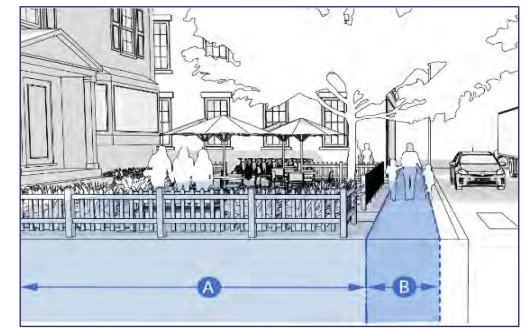
Pedestrian Throughway Zone



Public Frontage Zone



Building Frontage Zone



Source: City of Northampton Draft Form-Based Code, October 2019, prepared by Dodson & Flinker and Brovitz Community Planning & Design

Create/formalize public “at-grade” Bikeway entry at Park Ave (e.g., Gold’s Gym Parking Lot). [Arlington Heights]



Public
Realm



Estimated Budget
<\$50,000



Short Term
< 5 years



Source: Google Maps and FinePoint Associates

Proposed at-grade public accessway.

Description

Arlington Heights Bikeway market including 3,000 daily cyclists, walkers, joggers, and other trail users is largely untapped despite the very close proximity the district. Only a very small percentage of users were found exiting the trail to enter the business district.

The “unofficial” at-grade accessway through the Total Fitness parking lot (at 30 Park Avenue) serves as a short cut to/from the Bikeway but crosses a private parking lot without protective barriers, pavement markings or signage guiding users to the business district.

The recommended action is to convert this “unofficial” accessway to an official well-marked safe accessway.

The Town anticipates the 30 Park Ave property will be planned for a mixed-use redevelopment project within a few years presenting an opportunity to work with the developer to establish a formal public at-grade connection between the Bikeway and Park Avenue as a benefit to future residents on site as well as the general public and AH businesses.

Why?

1. To create an at-grade and convenient accessway from the Bikeway to the core area of the Arlington Heights Business District
2. To improve accessibility for cyclists and pedestrians and make a good impression on potential Bikeway customers

Steps

1. Collaborate with property owners and seek input on accessway design
2. Define at-grade accessway placement and conceptual design
3. Determine Final Design and Responsibility for Installation
4. Identify funding and installation accessway

New York Canalway Trail, Upstate New York

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The Erie Canalway Trail and Public At-Grade Accessway Connecting to the Village of Pittsford in Upstate New York.

Source: Google Maps

The Canalway Trail stretches across over 524 miles of upstate New York running from Albany to Buffalo and connecting to several cities and villages along the way. The network of multi-use trails that runs parallel to current or former sections of the Erie, Oswego, Cayuga-Seneca, and Champlain canals. The longest of these is the 365 miles long Erie Canalway Trail which was fully completed in 2021. Most of the Erie Canal Trail is located on the former "towpaths" adjacent to the canal which were used by mules to pull boats along the waterway. There are numerous overpasses along the canal and at-grade accessway from the trail to streets above the canal. These accessway are paved and marked with wayfinding signs identifying the points of interest in the districts above.

Sources: <https://bikeeriecanal.com>, Wikipedia

Activate Bow Street Park by installing amenities (to complement nearby food businesses and host events) and work with local organizations to develop programming. [East Lexington]



Public
Realm



Estimated Budget
<50,000



Short Term
< 5 years



Photo: FinePoint Associates

Bow Street Park on the Minuteman Bikeway.

Description

East Lexington business district does not have a highly visible and centrally located open space for civic gatherings near the Bikeway that would draw local and regional customers.

The existing open space in Bow Street Park is attractive but underutilized due to the lack of furnishings and programming.

This project would bring local residents and businesses together activate Bow Street Park. Based on early public input this may include the following objectives:

- Create a visual and physical connections between the Bikeway, businesses, and surrounding neighborhoods.
- Flexible space that supports a variety of community event types.
- Accessible elements for users of all ages and abilities.
- Limited vehicular access and efficient parking.
- Low –maintenance plantings and furnishings.
- Dedicated facilities for Bikeway users (bicycle parking, repair station, trail information, etc.).

Why?

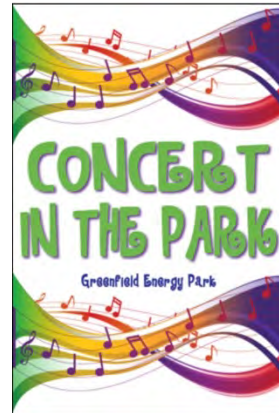
1. Opportunity for additional programming and events
2. Draw potential customers into East Lexington Business District from Lexington, nearby neighborhoods and the Bikeway
3. Provide open space for the community to safely gather and spend time outside

Steps

1. Seek Input on Enhancements to Bow Street Park
2. Prepare General Concept Plan and Obtain Permits
3. Public workshop to approve the plan
4. Determine sources and levels of funding
5. Secure Furnishings and Materials
6. Install and program activities and events

Best Practice Example

Energy Park, Greenfield MA



Sources: City of Greenfield MA Website and The Franklin County Musicians Cooperative Website

Gardner Field, West Acton MA



Existing Park and Concept Plan of Future Enhancements.

Source: Town of Acton, MA Homepage

Activate Veterans Memorial Park by installing additional amenities (to complement food businesses and host events) and work with local organizations to develop programming. [Bedford Center]



Public
Realm



Estimated Budget
<\$50,000



Short Term
< 5 years



Veterans Memorial Park Aerial View.

Source: Google Maps

Description

Veterans Park is located on Great Road (State Route 4 and 225) in Bedford Center adjacent to Bedford Market Place and the Narrow Gauge Trail

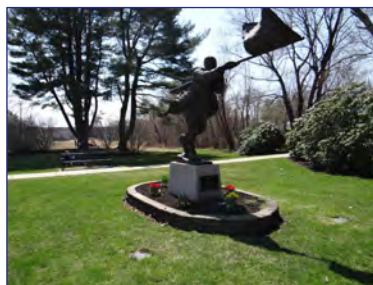
Highly visible to cyclists, walkers, and drivers with 425 feet of frontage on Great Road

The park has a large grassy open spaces and large shade trees providing good opportunity for a variety of community activities while being sensitive to memorials in the center of the park.

The wide sidewalks along the frontage with large shade trees on both sides allows for additional activation without impact to the memorial space.

Community representatives have identified several ideas for the future activation such as a small stage/gazebo or temporary bandshell with for live music, exercise classes, and other events on the east side of the park.

The park has to be carefully planned as it is a sacred place where the primary focus is honoring Bedford's veterans from as far back as the Revolutionary War.



Monument in Veterans Park, Bedford center, MA.

Photo: FinePoint Associates

Why?

1. Opportunity for additional programming and events
2. Draw potential customers into Bedford Center from nearby neighborhoods, Great Road (Rt. 4/225), Narrow Gauge Trail, and the Bikeway
3. Provide open space for the community to safely gather and spend time outside

Steps

1. Seek Input on Enhancements to Veterans Memorial Park
2. Prepare General Concept Plan and Obtain Permits
3. Coordinate Parking with Adjacent Property Owners
4. Determine sources and levels of funding
5. Secure Furnishings and Materials
6. Install and program activities and events

Town Common, Norwood, MA

PUBLIC
REALM



Memorial, Norwood Town Common.
Source: norwoodthenandnow.com



Norwood Town Common Gazebo where concerts take place.
Source: www.norwoodma.gov



Farmers' Market at Norwood Town Common.
Source: Jack B. form Foursquare

The Town Common is located in the heart of Downtown Norwood. The 1-acre open space include lawn and shade trees, walkways with benches, the Dempsey Memorial Bandstand, and several memorials including the 20-foot tall "Protectors of the American Way" veterans' memorial statue. The Town sponsors the Concerts on the Common series which features "old-fashioned" music such as marches, swings, and jazz. In 2021, this weekly concert series will be in its 27th year on the Town Common. The Common is also activated with a farmers' market, the annual Norwood Summerfest, and several other seasonal events

Sources:

Town of Norwood Planning & Economic Development Director; Town of Norwood Homepage
www.norwoodma.gov

Engage with MBTA to explore ways to activate/revitalize the underutilized Bus Depot property. ([Arlington Heights])



Public
Realm



Estimated Budget
<\$50,000



Short Term
< 5 years



MBTA Property, Arlington Heights.

Photo: FinePoint Associates

Description

Arlington Heights Bus Depot at 1369 Mass. Ave. is owned and operated by the MBTA.

The 25,145 SF property has 225 feet of frontage on Mass Ave and is largely under-utilized. Most of the site is paved over and used to turn buses around about 21 hours a day by the MBTA.

A small, older one-story building is located along the frontage is in poor condition and leased to Association for the Blind but not active use

The building is set back approximately 20 feet with a terrace in front, bike corral, raised granite planters, benches, bus shelter, and a curb extension/crosswalk.

Community participants consider this a “Hub” for Arlington Heights are interested in activating the site as a civic gathering space and a venue for music and other events and activities.

Community participants encourage the MBTA to allow for alternative civic uses and activation of the building and frontage as an initial step to fulfilling the site's place-making potential.

Why?

1. Opportunity for additional programming and events in the business district.
2. Draw potential customers into Arlington Center from nearby neighborhoods, Mass. Ave., and the Bikeway
3. Provide open space for the community to safely gather and spend time outside

Steps

1. Engage MBTA Advisory Board to discuss and negotiate opportunities to activate the bus depot frontage and the bus depot building
2. Define the short/long-term activation opportunities (lot, building, frontage)
3. Seek public input on enhancements to MBTA Bus Depot
4. Prepare general concept plan and obtain approval
5. Install furnishings along the frontage

Scituate, MA

PUBLIC
REALM



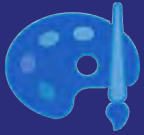
Community events make use of a public parking lot, Scituate MA.

Source: www.scituateharborma.com

The Town of Scituate regularly programs civic activities and events in the Scituate Harbor business district. A public walkway and bandstand located along the harbor frame the parking lot and provide an attractive setting for community gatherings. The annual Heritage Festival is a 3-day event that attracts thousands of local residents and visitors. This event is set up in the public parking lot and includes live music, amusement park, a children's playground, retail and food vendors, art exhibits, and more. In addition to Heritage Days, the Scituate Harbor Business Association holds community events in the parking lot throughout the year, including the Bandstand Music Series, Art Walk, Classic Cars in the Harbor, Random Acts of Poetry, and Restaurant Week.

Sources:

Scituate Harbor Business Association Homepage and Facebook Page; Town of Scituate Homepage



CULTURAL/
ARTS

Cultural/Arts

Create a mural program especially for public locations and businesses adjacent to the bikeway (All 3 districts).



Culture/Arts



Estimated Budget
\$2,500 - \$11,200



Short Term
Approx. 6-12 months



Photos: FinePoint Associates

Example of blank walls that could be considered for potential mural sites. Top: Berkshire Grey, Bedford, Bottom: Bottom Trader Joes, Arlington

Description

The Mural Program will enhance vibrancy and creating stronger connections between the Minuteman Bikeway and the three districts.

The murals would be complementary to our recommendation for more traditional wayfinding as they would informally create a sense of place and destination at the connection points between the bikeway and the districts.

Sites adjacent to the bikeway could be prioritized and the program could expand to the districts.

Why?

Make Bikeway users more aware of the business districts.

Provide attractive and meaningful public art in the Business Districts.

Steps

1. Identify partners, form committee
2. Identify top sites with potential for murals
3. Narrow site list to 2-3 locations
4. Put out Call for Artists
5. Select artist(s)
6. Coordinate mural installation
7. Publicize new artwork and evaluate

Best Practice Example

Maynard, Massachusetts

“Maynard as a canvas”

Goal: leverage the focus on public space during pandemic
create a public art celebrating the Town

Program Management

- Coordinated by Maynard Cultural Council

Choosing Sites

- Selected site was highly visible courtyard

Artists/RFP Process

- Open to Massachusetts’s artists with mural painting experience.
- One site was selected and details were given to artists

Partners

- Local mural curator
- Jury selected winning design

Funding

- Maynard Cultural District
- Maynard Sesquicentennial Committee
- Maynard Community Enhancement Fund
- Local crowdfunding
- Time and material donated by artists



Artist Anna Dugan poses in front of her mural at Naylor Court in Maynard

Source:
<https://www.wickedlocal.com/story/beacon-villager/2021/07/26/>



Create a Cultural District Art Walk along the Narrow Gauge Trail that would include a series of rotating temporary art installations.



Culture/Arts



Estimated Budget
\$2,350



Short Term
Approx. 6-12 months



Source: www.getyourguide.com

Wynwood Art Walk, Miami, FL

Description

The Art Walk will:

- Engage local artists in a display of both art and programming to create a vibrant space for residents and visitors.
- Contribute to Bedford Center Cultural District goals by creating opportunities for artists, and enhancing the district through arts and culture on the Narrow Gauge Trail.

Components

Short-term public art exhibit:

Serve as a starting point for future “Calls For Art” or more permanent installations.

Include free-standing installation, either sculpture, or a photo exhibit.

Programming on the Narrow Gauge Trail:

Enliven the space and create an association with the Trail as a cultural destination.

A “Walking Tour” style event is a good fit.

Steps

Curated, short-term public art exhibit

1. Form Planning Committee
2. Confirm potential funding sources
3. Create short-list of local artists
4. Confirm artist(s)
5. Create agreements with artist(s) for stipend, materials budget
6. Installation
7. Promote new artwork locally and regionally via social media, press, etc.

Programming

1. Form Planning Committee
2. Create short-list of possible “Walks” on the Trail (e.g., History Walk, StoryWalk, Poetry Walk)
3. Identify first event, and seek out partners and/or facilitator
4. Select date, create promotional materials
5. Hold event
6. Meet with Committee for event debrief and to promote event outcomes

Best Practice Example

Malden, Massachusetts

ArtLine

Goal: be a premier public art gallery with miles of professional murals, sculptures and community hubs.

Timeframe/Funding

- "Phase 1" Fall 2018- Spring 2019
- Funded by grants, private funders, fundraising events, crowdfunding (Patronicity)

Types of Art/Themes

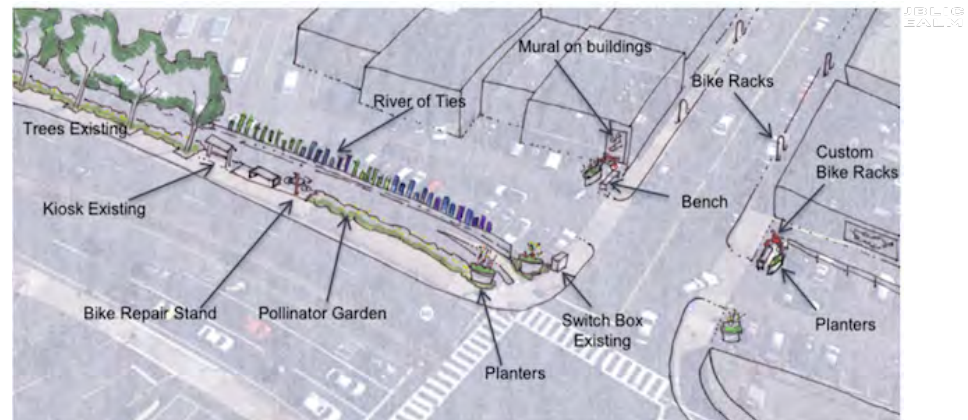
- Phase 1 Included murals, "pocket parks," designer benches, bike amenities, and planters

Artists/RFP Process

- Murals featured Malden-born artists
- "Call for Walls and fences" to business owners to identify available sites for the initiative

Partners

- Malden Arts (501c3) founded by artists was the organizer
- The City of Malden
- Groundwork Somerville
- Mass Development



Rendering of the future Artline including space for bikes, gardens, and gathering spaces



Source: www.maldenarts.org

River of Ties Installation along the ArtLine in Malden, MA



ADMIN
CAPACITY

Admin Capacity

Review and revise signage and outdoor display regulations to encourage variety of high-quality signs and outdoor merchandise display with design standards. [East Lexington]



Description

This project would revise the sign regulations to allow for more flexibility in the size and placement of wall signs, projecting signs, sandwich board signs, and outdoor displays.

Changes to the regulations should result in higher quality storefronts, improved customer visibility, and improved business revenues.



Existing Signs in E. Lexington.



Photos: T. Brovitz

Existing Conditions

Difficult to draw customers off the Bikeway because of the restrictions on wall and temporary sign.

Sign regulations are fairly restrictive in the CRS district where most of the businesses are located:

- Wall sign max size of 3 feet wide and 3 feet in height above the first floor and must face the street;
- Projecting signs max of 6 SF & require special permit
- All standing signs require a special permit;
- Permanent window signs, merchandise displays, and string lights are not permitted.
- Adding signage on the back wall facing the Bikeway would not be permitted without a variance.

Why?

1. Business owners identified signage regulations as an obstacle to business development.
2. Provides businesses an opportunity to improve their appearance and attract more customers.

Steps

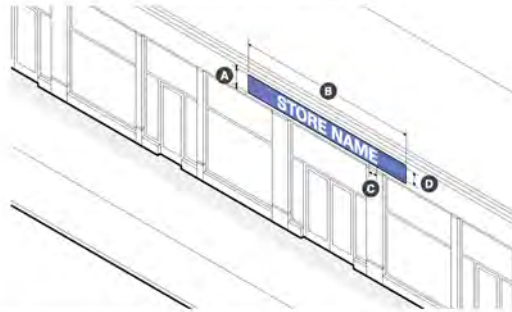
1. Evaluate existing regulations and design standards
2. Identify relevant case studies, character examples, and model regulations
3. Prepare sign and spill-out regulations and design standards
4. Conduct public workshops and hearings
5. Adoption revised sign and spill-out regulations and design standards

10. DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Commercial Signs

12. Wall Sign

- a. A sign attached flat or mounted parallel to the facade of a building that identifies a commercial establishment. Wall signs are intended to be viewed by pedestrians on the opposite side of the street.



Size	
Area (max)	40 sq. ft.
Height (min/max)	1 ft. / 4 ft.
Width (max)	90% of facade width

Lettering	
Width (max)	75% of sign width
Height (max)	75% of sign height
Projection from Facade (max)	6 inches
Retrace Height (max)	50% of Letter Height

Location	
Number of Signs	1 per Tenant (2 per Corner Tenant)

b. Standards

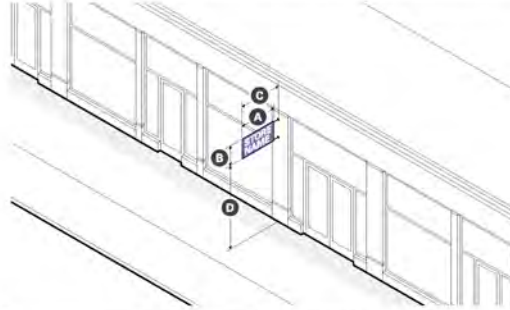
- Wall signs are only permitted for existing businesses.
- Internally illuminated sign cabinets are prohibited.
- Wall signs are prohibited from covering windows or architectural details.
- No portion of a wall sign is permitted to extend above the lower eave line of a building with a pitched roof.
- No portion of a wall sign is permitted to extend above the roof line or parapet wall of a flat-roofed building.
- No portion of a wall sign is permitted to extend above the cornice or expression line of the base of a building.
- Information type is limited to business name and logo. Additional information is prohibited.

10. DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Commercial Signs

11. Blade Sign

- a. A small, two-sided sign that is attached to and projecting perpendicularly from the facade of a building that identifies a commercial establishment. Blade signs are intended to be viewed by pedestrians on the same side of the street.



Size	
Area (max)	6 sq. ft. / side
Width (max)	4 ft.
Height (max)	3 ft.
Thickness (max)	6 inches

Location	
Clear Height over Sidewalk (max)	8 ft.
Projection from Facade (max)	4 ft.
Number of Signs	1 per Tenant

b. Standards

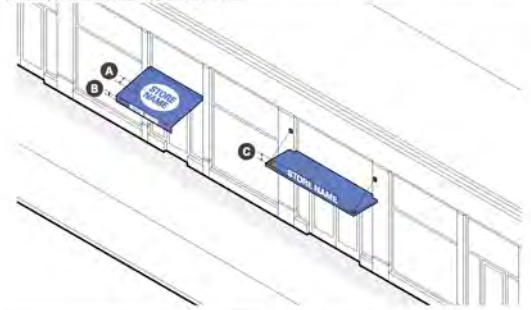
- Blade signs are prohibited for new businesses.
- A blade sign must be located within ten (10) feet of the building entrance for the business it identifies.
- A blade sign, including any support hardware, must be mounted below the sills of the second multi-windows of multi-story buildings or below the roof line, parapet wall, or cornice of a single-story building.
- Any supports, braces, anchors, and other supporting hardware must be integral to the design of the sign.
- Information type is limited to business name and logo. Additional information is prohibited.

10. DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Commercial Signs

13. Awning or Canopy Sign

- a. A sign that is painted, screen printed, sewn, or adhered onto the surface of an awning or attached above, below, or to the face of an entry canopy that identifies a commercial establishment. Awning/canopy signs are intended to be viewed by pedestrians on the opposite side of the street.



Area	
Located on Valance (max)	50% coverage
Located on Awning Slope (max)	25% coverage
Projecting from Canopy (max)	1 ft. per width of canopy

Lettering	
Height	—
Valance (max)	8 in.
Awning Slope (max)	18 in.
Projecting from Canopy (max)	12 in.

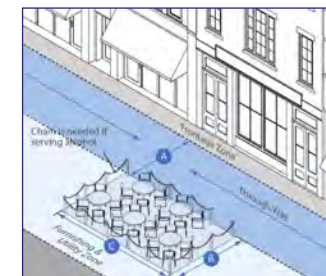
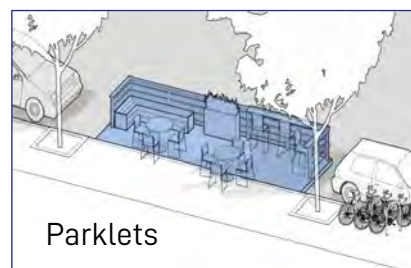
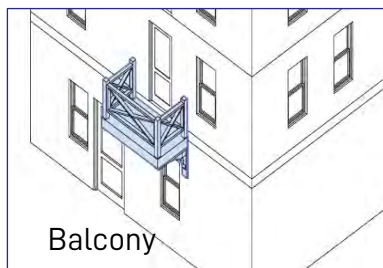
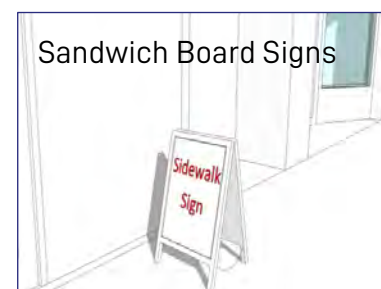
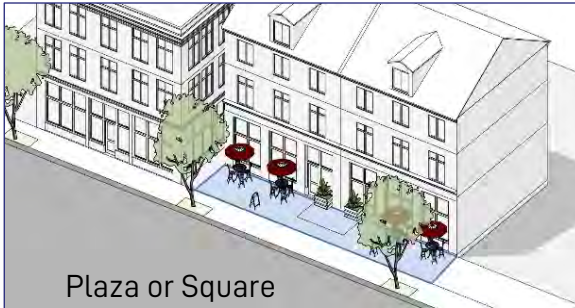
Location	
Number of Signs per Awning	1
Number of Signs per Canopy	1

b. Standards

- Signs are not permitted on awnings or canopies that do not conform to the provisions for each type of building component. See 13.D. (Business Component) for more information.
- Signage located on the sloping portion of an awning is only permitted for storefronts where the typical area for a wall sign is missing.
- Signage is prohibited on under-light awnings and on the side of awnings with closed ends.
- Information type is limited to business name, logo, and address. Additional information is prohibited.

Source: Somerville Zoning Ordinance

The City of Somerville adopted a new Form-Based Code in 2019 which includes context-based sign regulations with detailed design standards and illustrative diagrams for different types of signs. Above are example standards for wall signs, blade signs, and awning signs.



Example of spill-out standards adopted by the Town of Danvers, MA as part of a new character-based zoning for the Town Center and Route 35 Corridor in 2019. [Source](#): Prepared by Brovitz Community Planning and Dodson & Flinker).

Source: Prepared by Brovitz Community Planning and Dodson & Flinker).

Revise outdoor display regulations to promote lively, attractive outdoor merchandise displays and spill-out elements. [Bedford Center and Arlington Heights]



Admin.
Capacity



Short Term
<5 years

Estimated Budget
<\$50,000



*Existing Business
Spill-Outs in
Arlington heights
and Bedford Center.*

Photos: FinePoint Associates

Description

More flexible spill-out regulations with design standards will encourage more businesses taking employing café seating, projecting signs, outdoor merchandise displays, and other spill-outs to draw more customers.

Existing Conditions

Bedford: Current zoning regulations allow projecting signs and awning signs while sandwich board signs require a special permit. Café seating is permitted but outdoor merchandise displays are not permitted.

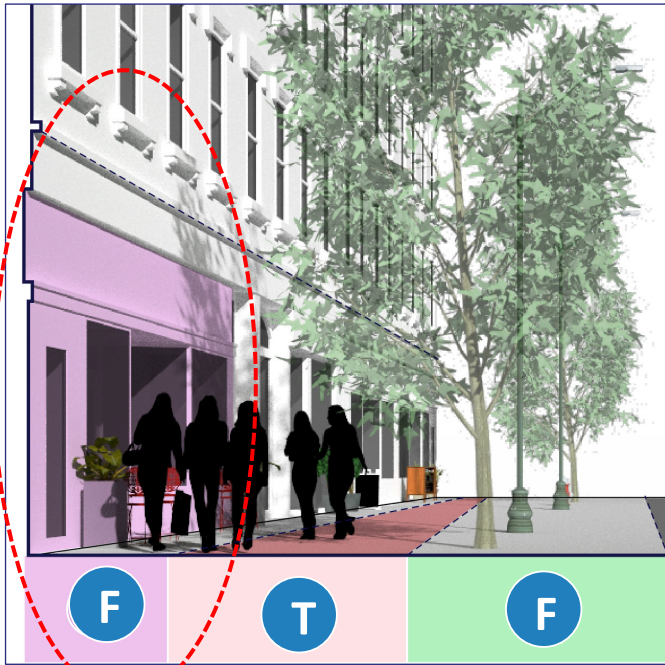
Arlington: Current regulations allow for a broad range of signs with reasonable standards. There are restrictions for signs projecting over public property, Town ROW, and the Bikeway. Sidewalk café seating and parklets are permitted but outdoor merchandise displays are not.

Why?

1. It's critical to make a good first impressions to potential customers as they enter the district.
2. Provide businesses an opportunity to improve their appearance and attract more customers.

Steps

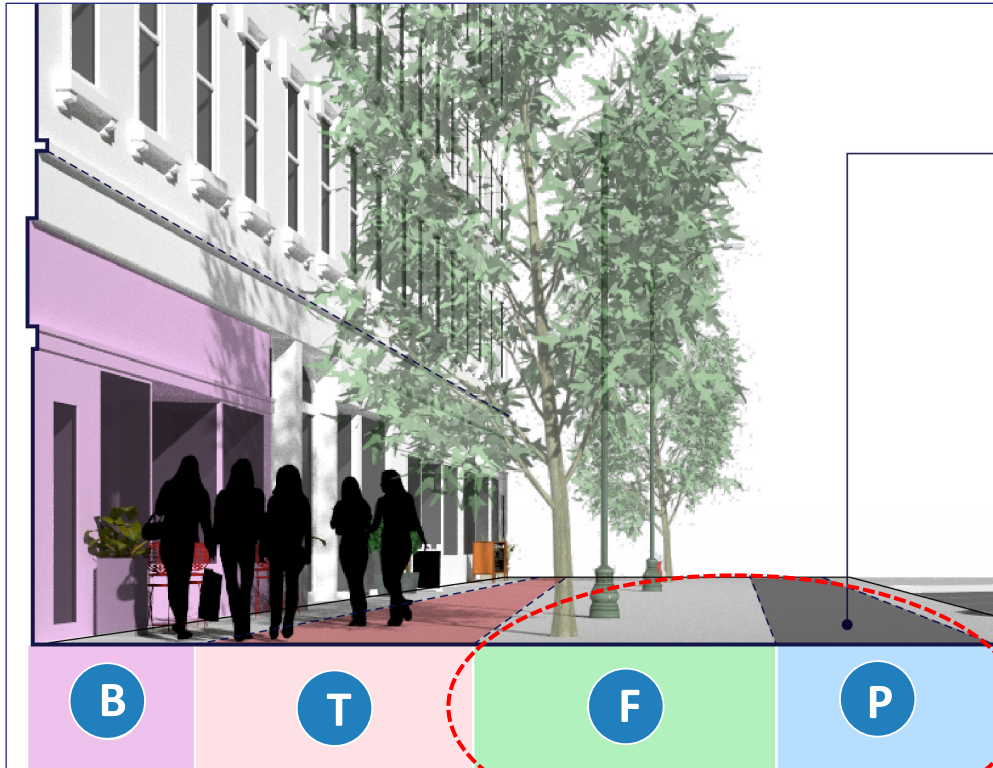
1. Evaluate existing regulations and design standards
2. Identify relevant case studies and model regulations
3. Prepare spill-out regulations and design standards
4. Conduct public workshops and hearings
5. Adoption revised spill-out regulations and design standards



Building Façade & Frontage Zone (F): Multiple combinations of spill-out elements:

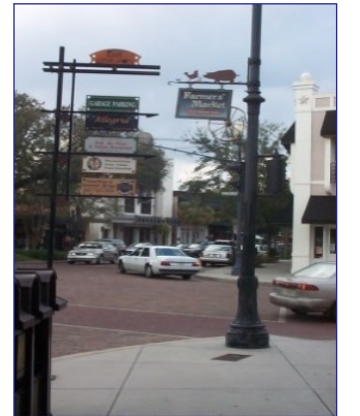
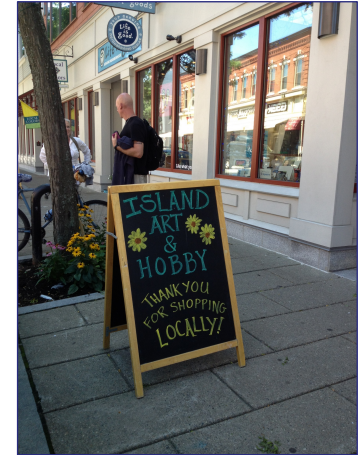
- Projecting Blade and Banner signs
- Awnings/Awning Signs
- Canopy and Marque Signs
- Outdoor Merchandise Displays
- Planters
- Café Seating





Furnishing (F) and Parking Zone (P):

- Parklets
- Café Seating
- Sandwich Board Signs
- Outdoor Merchandise Displays
- Business Signs



Funding Sources

Funding Sources for RRP Projects

Information has been provided

- **ARPA Funds**

- Federal ARPA being provided to eligible communities now
- State ARPA – legislature has not yet determined

- **Some new funding** sources have been created and are likely to have another round – January 2022

- **Some traditional** sources apply to RRP projects

- Some **additional funding** sources and **priorities for RRP** Projects may be announced in the coming weeks

- American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding
- Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Fund
- State ARPA Dollars

- Community Development Block Grant (HUD)

- Commonwealth Places (MD)

- Community Preservation Act

- Competitive Tourism Grants (EDA)

- Cultural Project Grants (MCC)

- Festival Grants (MCC)

- Hometown Grant Program (T-Mobile)

- MA Downtown Initiative Program (DHCD)

- MassTrails Grants

- MassWorks Infrastructure Program

- Massachusetts Travel and Tourism Recovery Grant (MOTT)
- Real Estate Services Technical Assistance (MD)

- Regional Economic Development Organization Grants (in partnership with REDO) (MOBD)
- Shared Streets and Spaces (MDOT)

- Under Utilized Properties (MD)

Updates & Next Steps for Advancing Recommendations



Lexington

Sandhya Iyer,
Economic
Development
Office



Arlington

Ali Carter, Economic
Development
Coordinator



Bedford

Alyssa Sandoval,
Housing and Economic
Development Director

Questions about Recommended Actions/Projects

Thank You!
